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DEVELOPMENT

the guilt and anxiety to which such hostile impulses give rise. It is clear that the task with which the child is faced, of hiding or transforming his aggressive wishes, in order to feel safe in the world and to keep the love of those upon whom his life depends, is very great and very pressing. Now when the adult establishes herself in firm but loving and understanding authority over one child, or as the accepted leader of a group of children, she gives the children essential aid, both against their aggressive wishes and against the anxiety which issues from them. She does this by taking over the function of the *super-ego* in the mind of the children individually.

I have already referred here and there to the problem of the *super-ego* in mental life, and shall deal with it more fully under *Guilt and Shame*. But it will be useful briefly to anticipate the fuller discussion at this point, so as to throw light upon the present material.

Our understanding of the *super-ego* was gained in the first instance by the psycho-analytic study of the unconscious guilt displayed so clearly by the obsessional neurotic and the melancholic patient, but confirmed by the further study of normal men and women. It is that organisation of forces within the total psyche which is very early differentiated off in development, after the pattern of the controlling parents, to do their work when they are absent. It is the forerunner of the adult conscience. Conscience is indeed but the conscious representative of this far deeper, more primitive and earlier formed *super-ego* in the unconscious levels of the mind. It is as if the child, at a certain (very early) stage of development, actually took the parents themselves into his mind. A part of himself begins to act towards the rest as

(he feels) the parents act (or may act) towards
his person as
a whole. It becomes the *parents-in-him*, and in
his phan-
tasies is indeed the parents in him. The
feeling of guilt
is the dread of this part of oneself that *is* the
parents, that
(in phantasy) judges and condemns and
reproaches and
punishes; and in punishment does to oneself
all that one
wanted to do to others. A great part of the
feeling of guilt
is thus unconscious, inaccessible to one's
ordinary self-
awareness. And for reasons which will be
clearer after
examination of later sections of the material,
the phantasied
punishments from the super-ego are often
greatly dangerous